

Abramson's Budget Proposal Builds Foundation For Better Future

LOUISVILLE (May 29, 2003) – Mayor Jerry Abramson today unveiled a budget proposal for next year that lays the foundation for “the most ambitious construction project our community has ever undertaken – building a new local government.”

As part of that effort, Abramson said the \$430 million budget he proposed to the Metro Council Thursday focuses on creating a more efficient government that keeps the promises of merger -- delivery of basic services without raising taxes.

“Today, with this proposed budget, we begin laying a strong foundation that will shape the future of our new city,” Abramson said. “We lay this foundation in challenging times as cities and states all over the country, faced with falling revenues, slash jobs and services. . . . With this budget, we become one – one government dedicated to ambitious dreams for all our citizens with one financial blueprint for our community’s future.”

Highlights of the budget include:

- Utilizing \$2 million in general funds – to attract more than \$11 million in state and federal funds – to repair streets, bridges, sidewalks and traffic signals.
- Allocating \$2.7 million for repairs, renovations and expansions at parks throughout the community
- Funding of \$2.7 million to purchase new library books and providing \$500,000 for implementation of a master plan that calls for creating four new libraries
- Awarding \$5.7 million to more than 130 non-profit agencies through an improved external grant program
- Spending nearly \$1 million to purchase heavy-duty garbage carts for the remaining 23,000 households in the Urban Services District
- Maintaining the authorized strength of the police department and spending nearly \$300,000 for police, fire and emergency services safety equipment
- Investing \$580,000 to create the Corridors of Opportunity in Louisville program (COOL), which will help revitalize empty and rundown commercial buildings and strips along the city’s major corridors and \$150,000 to identify and encourage Louisville companies poised for job growth and expansion
- Funding more than \$1 million in capital improvements in downtown projects, ranging from street improvements, downtown housing and funding for the continued Waterfront Park expansion

As part of his budget, Abramson this week also announced that he is eliminating more than 660 positions in the new government, achieving a cost savings of

more than \$10 million annually. In addition, the mayor recently announced significant changes to city's fleet management that will create one-time savings of \$6 million. The savings are possible because of "the efficiencies and synergies offered by merger to shape a smaller, smarter government that truly accomplishes more with less," Abramson said.

The challenging economic climate, he said, accelerated the timing for moves such as layoffs and the elimination of positions throughout the new government. "I built 13 city budgets as mayor of the old city of Louisville," Abramson said. "I saw federal programs come and go, watched our economy sizzle and fizzle. But nothing comes close to this challenge."

But Abramson added that the budget for next year is a "to-be-continued budget," one in which a strong foundation will be laid as a base for building a stronger community in the long term.

"Our citizens will see the foundation we build together today serve as a strong base . . . upon which ambitious new programs can be constructed that bring people together, keep our citizens safe, improve the quality of education and jobs in our region and strengthen our neighborhoods, center city to suburb," Abramson said. "Working together, we can be that group of thoughtful, committed citizens who can change our 386-square mile piece of the world, the new city of Louisville – our hometown."